DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 237 593 UD 023 196

TITLE Cooperative Efforts: Voluntary Resettlement Agencies and Mutual Assistance Associations.
INSTITUTION Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs, New York, NY. Refugee Center.
PUB DATE Jul 83
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; Cultural Background; Financial Support; *Land Settlement; Refugees; Shared Facilities; Shared Services; *Social Services; Technical Assistance; *Voluntary Agencies; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS *Mutual Assistance Associations

ABSTRACT

In 1983, the Refugee Resource Center conducted a survey of Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA's) and local voluntary resettlement agency affiliates to find out how the two types of organizations worked together to carry out refugee resettlement. According to the survey, the relations between agency affiliates and MAA's generally revolved around three distinct areas: provision of services to the refugee population, organization and development of the MAA's, and cultural preservation. Within these areas, however, the character of the relationship varied considerably. According to responses to the survey, MAA/affiliate relationships were divided into five categories: (1) cooperative efforts, such as joint programs and cooperative delivery of services; (2) financial assistance, primarily given to MAA's by agency affiliates for organizational purposes; (3) in-kind contributions, the most frequently cited being the provision of office space by agency affiliates for the MAA's; (4) technical assistance, given on an organization to organization level, primarily from agency affiliates to MAA's, and most often involving help in the beginning stages of a MAA's development; and (5) volunteer assistance, services given by an organization to refugee clients, primarily given by MAA's, and most often involving aid for sponsorship or sponsorship development. (CMG)

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In April, 1983, The Refugee Resource Center conducted a survey of 183 mutual assistance associations and 439 local voluntary resettlement agency affiliates to find out how the two types of organizations worked together to carry out refugee resettlement. Thirty-two MAAs and one hundred and forty-three agency affiliates responded, a total return of 28%. The return rate for MAAs was 18.2% (eight of the surveys sent to MAAs were returned as undeliverable) and for agencies was 32.5%.

The voluntary resettlement agencies to which the survey was sent were those listed as affiliates by the twelve national agencies which are the primary facilitators of refugee resettlement in the United States. The mutual assistance associations to which the survey was sent were taken from the Refugee Resource Center mailing list which has been developed from a variety of sources over the past several years. Generally, a mutual assistance association can be defined as a group of individuals who organize formally, usually around one or more shared characteristics, for mutual benefit. Many of the refugee mutual assistance associations which have developed over the past few years have become incorporated, for the purpose of this survey, however, this was not a criterion.

Of the respondents, ninety-nine resettlement agency affiliates and twenty-two mutual assistance associations reported some level of cooperative relationship with the other type of agency. Twenty-nine agency affiliates and six MAAs reported no involvement and fifteen agency affiliates and four MAAs did not appear to recognize the term used to describe the other type of agency but listed relationships with sister organizations of the same type.

Voluntary Resettlement Agency Response

In the ninety-nine positive responses received from voluntary resettlement agencies, two hundred and thirty-five mutual assistance associations were identified. The primary designation for these associations based on association name was national or ethnic. Further distinctions were also made relating to religion, profession, purpose or former military service. The breakdown of associations identified by national or ethnic origin was:

Vietnamese	66	Soviet	7
Cambodian	37	Ethiopian	6
Lao	34	Eritrean	1

Hmong	11	Haitian	5
Lao/Hmong	18	Afghan	5
Indochinese/ Multi-ethnic	8	Assyrian	1
Mien	1	Angolan	1
Cham	1	Romanian	1
Polish	8	Cuban	2

Thirty-seven voluntary resettlement agencies listed one mutual assistance association with which they had worked or were currently working. The remaining sixty-two agencies identified more than one MAA with which they worked.

Number of MAAs	Number of Agencies Identifying
1	37
2	8
3	17
4	12
5	7
6	4
7	4
9	3
15	1
MAA Coalition	2
Unspecified/Several	4

For the twenty-nine agencies which reported no involvement with mutual assistance associations, the following reasons were given:

No refugees arriving	3
Have tried/Are trying	5
No associations exist	5
No explanation	16

Mutual Assistance Association Response

The breakdown of mutual assistance associations responding to the survey was:

Vietnamese	8	Indochinese Multi-ethnic	5
Cambodian	8	Hmong	1
Lao	4	Thai Dam	1
Lao/Hmong	3	Ethiopian	2

The range of number of agencies with which the twenty-two associations responding positively were associated follows:

Number of Agencies	Number of MAAs Identifying
1	7
2	7

Number of Agencies (Continued)	Number of MAAs Identifying (Continued)
3	5
5	1
6	1
7	1

Type of Relationship

The relationships between the voluntary resettlement agencies and mutual assistance associations generally revolved around several distinct areas: provision of services to the refugee population, organization and development of the associations and cultural preservation. Within these areas, however, the character of the relationship varied considerably. Responses were divided into five categories: cooperative efforts, financial assistance, in-kind contributions, technical assistance and volunteer assistance. Activities given in the responses were then organized according to these categories.

Cooperative Efforts

Activities were placed in this category when a balance of effort by both types of organizations was indicated. Six resettlement agencies and twelve mutual assistance associations simply indicated cooperative relationships without specifying the nature of the cooperative activities. An additional twenty-eight agencies listed cooperative efforts but also indicated a variety of other types of interaction.

Six resettlement agencies and two mutual assistance associations reported submission of joint proposals, establishment of joint programs or cooperative delivery of services. Joint programs included assistance with application for permanent resident status, co-sponsorship of ESL classes, cultural preservation and vocational classes.

Two resettlement agencies reported meeting frequently with association leaders to plan services and resolve problems.

Six agencies and one association reported mutual referral of clients. Two agencies reported working closely with associations to ease tensions between refugees and other groups.

Three agencies and one association cited information sharing and four agencies listed cooperation in staging cultural events.

COOPERATIVE EFFORTS	AGENCY RESPONSE		MAA RESPONSE	
	AGENCY	MAA	AGENCY	MAA
JOINT PROPOSALS/PROGRAMS/SERVICES	6			2
LETTERS OF AGREEMENT	2			
CONSULTATION/MEETING TO DISCUSS PROGRAMS/GOALS/PROBLEMS	14			
REFERRAL	6			1
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	2			
INFORMATION SHARING	3			1
SOCIAL/CULTURAL EVENTS	4			
GENERAL/UNSPECIFIED	34			12

Financial Assistance

Both agency affiliates and MAAs indicated that this was primarily assistance given to mutual assistance associations from agency affiliates for organizational purposes. Several agency affiliates, however, cited financial contributions made by MAAs for resettlement activities or expenses such as rent.

Ten resettlement agencies and three MAAs indicated that voluntary resettlement agencies had made unspecified financial contributions to associations. Five agencies reported financial contributions made by associations to individual refugees or refugee families.

The most frequently cited purpose for which funds were given was to assist associations in staging cultural events or festivals. Twelve agencies and one MAA listed this.

Establishment and maintenance of an association office was the second most frequent purpose for which financial assistance was given with seven agencies reporting donations for office, space, nine reporting purchase of equipment and two subsidizing association staff.

Seven agencies and four associations reported that resettlement agencies had sub-contracted with associations for services to refugees.

Other purposes for which resettlement agencies reported contributing money to associations were: newsletter, five agencies; radio program, one agency; grants or loans, six agencies, one MAA; to enable association members to attend meetings, two agencies and to maintain a craft center, one agency.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	AGENCY RESPONSE		MAA RESPONSE	
	AGENCY	MAA	AGENCY	MAA
NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION/CULTURAL FESTIVAL	12		1	
OFFICE/RENT	7			
STAFF	2			
NEWSLETTER/RADIO PROGRAM	6			
GRANTS/LOANS	6		1	
SUB-CONTRACT	7		4	
EQUIPMENT	9			
CRAFT CENTER	1			
TO ATTEND MEETINGS	2			
UNSPECIFIED/OTHER	10	5	3	

In-kind Contributions

Six agencies and two MAAs listed unspecified in-kind contributions by resettlement agencies to mutual assistance associations while one agency and one MAA indicated unspecified in-kind contributions from MAAs.

The most frequently cited in-kind contribution was office or meeting space provided by agencies to associations with fourteen agencies listing this.

Next frequent was the provision of goods, furniture or office supplies with eleven agencies and three MAAs citing this type of contribution to associations and one agency citing this type of contribution from an association to refugee families.

Nine agencies and one MAA reported the contribution of staff support or clerical assistance. Frequently, this was to assist in the organization of a cultural event or the publication of a newsletter.

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS	AGENCY RESPONSE		MAA RESPONSE	
	AGENCY	MAA	AGENCY	MAA
GOODS/FURNITURE/OFFICE SUPPLIES	11	1	3	
STAFF SUPPORT/CLERICAL ASSISTANCE	9		1	
OFFICE/MEETING SPACE	14			
OTHER	6	1	2	1

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Technical Assistance

Activities under technical assistance involved assistance given on an organization to organization level. With one exception, both agencies and associations reported this as assistance from resettlement agencies to MAAs. The exception was a resettlement agency which reported having MAA representatives on its advisory board.

The greatest number of responses involved assistance given by resettlement agencies in the beginning stages of an association's development with twelve agencies reporting assistance with incorporation, eleven agencies and three MAAs reporting assistance in community organization and four agencies reporting assistance in obtaining legal services related to incorporation.

Thirteen agencies and two MAAs reported agency assistance in proposal writing and obtaining funds and ten agencies indicated that their representatives served on association advisory boards or as a member of an association's board of directors.

Five other areas in which agencies provided technical assistance to associations were identified: agricultural projects, two agencies; community relations, one agency and one MAA; establishment of a cottage industry or craft center, two agencies; serving as fiscal agent,

two agencies and two MAAs and advice, counseling or training, three agencies and two MAAs.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	AGENCY RESPONSE		MAA RESPONSE	
	AGENCY	MAA	AGENCY	MAA
HELP WITH INCORPORATION	12			
PROPOSAL WRITING/OBTAINING FUNDS	13		2	
AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS	2			
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	1		1	
LEGAL SERVICES	4			
ESTABLISHING COTTAGE INDUSTRY/ CRAFT CENTER	2			
MEMBERS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS/ ADVISORY BOARD	10	1		
FISCAL AGENT	2		2	
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION	11		3	
ADVICE/COUNSELING/TRAINING	3		2	

Volunteer Assistance

Activities under volunteer assistance involved services given by an organization to refugee clients. With one exception, both agencies and MAAs reported these as assistance given by mutual assistance associations. The exception was volunteer teaching staff recruited by an agency for a class held by an association.

The type of assistance cited most frequently was aid in sponsorship or sponsorship development with fifteen agencies and one MAA listing this activity.

The service with the second highest frequency was translation/interpretation with twelve agencies and one MAA reporting this activity by associations.

Nine agencies reported MAA volunteer involvement in the organization of social and cultural events and eight agencies and one MAA listed association contributions in the areas of casework, education or counseling.

Job development and orientation were each identified by five agencies as areas of MAA volunteer activity. The remaining specific activities cited were: transportation, two agencies; sports, two agencies and immigration assistance, one agency.

In addition, three agencies and two MAAs indicated mutual assistance association volunteer activity without specifying its nature.

VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE	AGENCY RESPONSE		MAA RESPONSE	
	AGENCY	MAA	AGENCY	MAA
TRANSLATION/INTERPRETATION		12		1
SPONSORSHIP/SPONSORSHIP DEVELOPMENT		15		1
JOB DEVELOPMENT		5		
CASEWORK/EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE/ COUNSELING		8	1	1
IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE		1		
ORIENTATION		5		
SOCIAL/CULTURAL ACTIVITIES		9		
TRANSPORTATION		2		
SPORTS		2		
OTHER		3		2

APPENDIX

LOCAL RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

AGENCY _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

TELEPHONE _____

CONTACT PERSON _____

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATIONS (NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE)	NATURE OF INVOLVEMENT (Cooperative effort, in-kind contribution, financial contribution, sub-contract, etc.)	DATES OF INVOLVEMENT

ASSOCIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

TELEPHONE _____

CONTACT PERSON _____

VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT AGENCY (NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE)	NATURE OF INVOLVEMENT (Cooperative effort, in-kind contribution, financial contribution, subcontract)	DATES OF INVOLVEMENT